The thoughtful exert themselves. They do not delight in any abode. They leave their house and home as swans their lake.

—*The Dhammapada*

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"THE SUBTLE THREAD"

SPEAKING of the Spiritualist movement, by means of which she first gained the attention of the world, H. P. Blavatsky remarked years later that "its phenomena, its psychic and mesmeric manifestations, were but the cyclic pioneers of pre-historic Theosophy." She also referred to Spiritualism as the revival of "crude Theosophy." Taken in this sense, the psychic manifestations of the nineteenth century heralded the deeper awakening she described in her article "The Tidal Wave," which hailed as a spiritual as well as psychic change the humanizing efforts of several distinguished writers, singling out in particular Dostoevski as a "born Theosophist." She added that in identifying the sources of the new spirit she did not include authors alone, but also known and unknown philanthropists and altruists. The period, in short, of the last quarter of the century was rich in constructive tendencies, manifesting at every level, and this resurrecting voice of the great human Soul, she said, resounded in the best representatives of thought and learning, and in the lowest as well as the highest, bringing stimulation to all.

Today, not quite a century later, we are beginning to see the even broader potentialities of the cycle which lies ahead. For to the occasional signs of a recrudescing Spiritualism is added an incredible variety of supposedly "occult" developments, and all this in a soil of feeling and yearning made more than ready by a generation of moral indignation directed at the materialism of

the age—including potentialities for destruction now popularly attributed to the genius of modern science and its applications in technology. A polar change is reversing the opinions about science which were strongly uppermost a hundred years ago. At the same time, what seem echoes of certain criticisms made of denominational religion in Theosophical literature are now commonplaces of the new spirit, and the old orthodoxies seem fated to disintegrate quite rapidly, and almost willingly in some cases. Meanwhile, the wars of this century have brought numerous Westerners into intimate contact with Eastern cultures and religions; one might say that the entirety of Western civilization is entering a period of extreme flux.

But while the present is in many ways like the past, there are also differences. The hunger for psychic powers in the nineteenth century, to which both H.P.B. and Mr. Judge felt obliged to address warnings and admonitions, again and again, has altered somewhat in its expression, now seeming to lay the greatest emphasis on "personal development." With the disgust for the vulgar acquisitiveness of Western affluence so prevalent in the young, the cry is rather for "spiritual" attainments, although the meaning of "spiritual" is usually open to question. And the means to this attainment is commonly agreed to lie in the discipline of "meditation," of which there are already numerous versions, with literally dozens of gurus prepared to give instruction, and doubtless many more to emerge.

That "meditation" is the source of the highest spiritual knowledge as well as of almost unlimited powers, for the one who understands and pursues this practice, is beyond dispute. One has but to turn to *The Secret Doctrine* to learn that the creative activities of the highest beings become possible through abstract meditation, even as Krishna declares in the *Bhagavad-Gita.* The meaning of the name of the ancient book upon which *The Secret Doctrine* is based is given as "knowledge through meditation."

Why, then, is there not clear injunction as to its practice by students? This is a question sometimes asked these days, since the desire for something "practical" has in many cases not been abandoned along with the external sorts of practicality now held in such contempt by the young. There is still the desire for "results," and for, if not "instant growth," at least something tangible in the

way of work toward personal development. Such questions are not easy to meet when those who question have too quickly passed by Krishna's remark to Arjuna: "The path of the unmanifested is with difficulty attained by corporeal beings." However, some comments by Mr. Judge may be helpful. Writing for the *Irish Theosophist* during its first year of publication, Mr. Judge spoke of "Meditation, Concentration, Will," as being of the greatest interest to Theosophists. He continued in a way which suggests that attitudes within the Movement during the last century were in some ways prophetic of those more broadly prevalent in the world today. He said:

> A canvass of opinions would probably show that the majority of our reading and thinking members would rather hear these subjects discussed and read definite directions about them than any others in the entire field. They say they must meditate, they declare a wish for concentration, they would like a powerful will, and they sigh for strict directions, readable by the most foolish theosophist. It is a western cry for curriculum, a course, a staked path, a line and rule by inches and links. Yet the path has long been outlined and described, so that anyone could read the directions whose mind has not been half-ruined by modern false education, and memory rotted by the superficial methods of a superficial literature and a wholly vain modern life.
>
> Let us divide Meditation into two sorts. First is the meditation practiced at a set time, or an occasional one, whether by design or from physiological idiosyncrasy. Second is the meditation of an entire lifetime, that single thread of intention, intentness, and desire running through the years stretching between the cradle and the grave. For the first in Patanjali's Aphorisms will be found all needful rules and particularity. If these are studied and not forgotten, then practice must give results. How many of those who reiterate the call for instruction on this head have read that book, only to turn it down and never again consider it? Far too many.

Then Mr. Judge turns to the "subtle thread of a life meditation" which is practiced every hour by us all. Here is determined the moral quality of one's whole life, and here is the crux of our destiny, since all that we do deliberately, in whatever discipline we may adopt, has for its ultimate purpose the reconstruction or reordering of the conduct of life, to bring it into harmony with the purposes of the incarnated soul. It is for this reason that the *first* object of the Theosophical Movement is the Brotherhood

of Man, to be worked for by the establishment of a nucleus of those wholly committed to this ideal, since only by the formation of a nucleus can those accumulations follow which, in the end, will bring into being the great body the Founders had in view.

Enlightenment is indeed the end of it all, and enlightenment does involve psychological discipline, as Patanjali makes clear, but the quest for enlightenment in isolation from the profound altruistic motives of the Teachers becomes a sectarian and indeed a selfish enterprise. It should proceed hand in hand with work for others. The history of the high religions is in large part a history of the failure to preserve the unity of the objectives of life, put into words by the three objects of the Theosophical Movement, the third of which is concerned with the inner powers and faculties of man and of nature. The ethical commitment comes first, and should be the ruling principle for those who would follow in the footsteps of the Buddha.

It is worth noting here that the development of the will—or rather, of the capacity to call upon it, since the will is not "developed"—is not possible through the practice of Hatha Yoga, which deals almost entirely with the psycho-physiological part of man. Col. Olcott, the first and lifetime president of the Theosophical Society, pointed out that Hatha Yoga was "strongly denounced by all the philosophers" and that Sankaracharya spoke strongly against the practice. He added that "the Raja Yogis try to control the mind itself by following the rules laid down by the greatest of adepts." Some indication of the dangers inherent in undertaking a psychological discipline without prior preparation in philosophy, and without subduing both the passions and the selfish tendencies, is suggested by a statement by Mr. Judge in his rendition of *Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms:*

> Patanjali and his school well knew that the secret of directing the will with ten times the ordinary force might be discovered if they outlined the method, and then bad men whose desires were strong and conscience wanting would use it with impunity against their fellows; or that even sincere students might be carried away from spirituality when dazzled by the wonderful results flowing from a training of the will alone. Patanjali is silent upon the subject for this reason among others.

He also says:

> In Patanjali's Aphorisms there is some slight allusion to the practices of Hatha Yoga, such as "postures," each of which

> is more difficult than those preceding, and "retention of the breath," but he distinctly says that mortification and other practices are either for the purpose of extenuating certain mental afflictions or for the more easy attainment of concentration of mind.
>
> In Hatha Yoga practice, on the contrary, the result is psychic development at the delay or expense of the spiritual nature. These last named practices and results may allure the Western student, but from our knowledge of inherent racial difficulties there is not much fear that many will persist in them.

One last comment on this subject. Readers of current literature on the practices now becoming popular in the United States are likely to find occasional observations by writers on Zen or other special areas of psychological cultivation which, while drawing comparisons between the Eastern authorities, such as Zen Masters, and distinguished Western thinkers, such as Emerson, suggest that the Westerners did not reach the "heights" that become possible to practitioners of these disciplines. Apart from questions of taste, it seems somewhat ridiculous for persons who do not begin to have the broad philosophical depths of a man like Emerson to presume to rate his "spiritual development." Rather, such comments disclose the difference between elaborate verbal "knowledge" of inward states—which is an evolution of language rather than actual knowing—and the insight which belongs naturally to such men as Emerson and some others. This specialization in "spiritual" discipline seems characteristic of monastic traditions, most of which have a quietistic tendency. Actually, the true occultist would not be likely to make statements of this sort at all, since he would have another view of the kind of help needed by the world, and would not give attention to measuring the various degrees of "enlightenment" to which various individuals had attained. Workers in behalf of *world* enlightenment may wear various disguises, and even submit to limitations of time and place, simply *in order* to do their chosen work in the world. While what may be termed "theological" reflection of the Buddha's great mission may have its uses in preparing the soil of the race mind for a further awakening, the Theosophical Teachers, who give evidence of first-hand access to the sources of the Wisdom-Religion, are exemplars not only of the ethics of the philosophy, but also of its symmetries and fidelities to a great purpose that has not changed in its basic intent since the first great incarnation of the Manasa.

THE PATH OF ACTION

THE Mohammedan teacher directs his disciples to tread carefully the razor's edge between the good and the bad; only a hair line divides the false from the true. In this the Asiatic took an excellent illustration, for the "hair line" is the small stroke *alif,* which, placed in a word, may alter the sense from the true to the false.

In chapter four of *The Bhagavad-Gita,* entitled, "Jnana-Yog," or the book of the Religion of Knowledge, the blessed Krishna instructs Arjuna upon the nature of action, saying: "Renunciation of and devotion through works, are both means of final emancipation; but of these two, devotion through works is more highly esteemed (by Him) than the renunciation of them"; and, "the nature of action, of forbidden action, and of inaction must be well learned. The Path of Action is obscure and difficult to discern."

In ordinary humdrum life these words of Krishna are true enough, but their force is strangely felt in the mind of the devoted student of Theosophy, and especially if he happens to be a member of the Theosophical Society.

That body of investigators has now passed its probationary period, so that as a whole it is an accepted chela of the Blessed Masters who gave the impulse that brought it into being. Every member of it, therefore, stands to the whole Society as every fibre in the body of any single chela does to the whole man. Thus now, more than ever before, does each member of the Society feel disturbing influences; and the Path of Action becomes more and more likely to be obscured.

Always existing or coming into existence in our ranks, have been centers of emotional disturbance. Those who expect that these perturbations ought now to cease and grow less likely to recur, will find themselves mistaken. The increase of interest that is being taken in the Society's work, and the larger number of earnest students who are with us than at any previous period, con-

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NOTE.—This article was first published by Mr. Judge in the *Path* for November, 1887, and reprinted in THEOSOPHY, February, 1952.

stitute elements of agitation. Each new member is another nature added, and every one acts after his own nature. Thus the chances for being discomposed are sure to increase; and it is better thus, for peace with stagnation partakes of the nature of what is called in *The Bhagavad-Gita, Tamagunam,* or, of the quality of darkness. This quality of darkness, than which there is nothing worse, is the chief component of indifference, and indifference leads only to extinction.

Still another element in this question that every earnest Theosophist has to solve, and which in itself contains the potency of manifold commotions, is a law, hard to define, yet inexorable in its action. For its clearer comprehension we may say that it is shown in nature by the rising of the sun. In the night when the moon's rays flooded the scene, every object was covered with a romantic light, and when that luminary went down, it left everything in a partial obscurity wherein many doubtful characters could conceal their identity or even masquerade for that which they were not. But on the sun's arising all objects stand out in their true colors; the rugged bark of the oak has lost the softening cover of partial day; the rank weeds can no longer be imagined as the malwa flowers. The powerful hand of the God of day has unveiled the character of all.

It must not be supposed that a record has been kept by any officials, from which are to be taken and published the characters of our members. There is no need of that; circumstances taking place in natural order, or apparently from eccentric motion, will cause us all, whether we will or not, to stand forth for what we are.

Every one of us will have to stop and learn in the cave outside of the Hall of Learning, before we can enter there. Very true that cave, with all its dark shadows and agitating influences, is an illusion, but it is one that very few will fail to create, for hard indeed to be overcome are the illusions of matter. In that shall we discover the nature of action and inaction; there we will come to admit that although the quality of action partakes of the nature of badness, yet it is nearer to the quality of truth than is that which we have called darkness, quietude, indifference. Out of the turmoil and the strife of an apparently untamed life may arise one who is a warrior for Truth. A thousand errors of judgment made by an

earnest student, who with a pure and high motive strives to push on the Cause, are better than the outward goodness of those who are judges of their fellows. All these errors made in a good cause, while sowing good seed, will be atoned by the motive.

We must not then be judges of any man. We cannot assume to say who shall or shall not be allowed to enter and to work in the Theosophical Society. The Masters who founded it wish us to offer its influence and its light to all, regardless of what we may ourselves think; we are to sow the seed, and when it falls on stony ground no blame attaches to the sower.

Nor is our Society for good and respectable people only. Now, as much as when Jesus of Nazareth spoke, is it true that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repenteth, than over ninety-nine just men who need no repentance.

Remembering then that the Path of Action is obscure and difficult to be discerned, let us beware of the illusions of matter.

—HADJII ERINN

THROUGH MYRIAD TIME

If I have not made matters clear, let me try again. That the world came to its present state from the hand of God or nature, as easily as your will moves your hand, that Not-Being passed smoothly into Being, is no certain truth. That it emerged from the womb of nothingness at a word, who can tell us this? What reason have we for thinking that it was an easy thing to call into existence a universe of conscious and interacting intelligences, to harmonize their desires, to attain perfection in such an enterprise in a moment of time? It may well be that to attain to man's mind and soul a great circle was required, like the great circle sailed by mariners. So hard a thing it may have been to found the state of man.

W. MACNEILE DIXON

LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE

FAMILIARITY with the verbal forms in which the Theosophical teaching is expressed, and *knowledge* of the philosophy, as every student sooner or later realizes, are entirely different things. It is something of a shock to make this discovery, but it is also the beginning of wisdom.

Perception that words are not knowledge, and that even intellectual comprehension is useless by itself, may arise from any one of several causes. To some it comes as a sudden feeling of inadequacy in a difficult situation. The evening before, the student may have discoursed almost learnedly about the after-death states and the cycle of reincarnation, and now he is confronted with the immediate need of one who has lost a loved one: What shall he say? Now he must draw on what he has felt and lived of the philosophy; apart from this, the *words* have but a hollow sound.

Another student may find himself unexpectedly in the society of several serious scientists. With growing humility, he listens to their earnest discussions and after a time comes to have a kind of respect for their agnosticism. Close contact has brought him understanding of the scientific frame of mind, and while still able to see its limitations, never again will he dispose of all "modern science" with an airy wave of the hand. Again, opportunity may come for him to speak of what he knows. What shall he say? Recite the "Fundamentals" as found beginning at page 12 of the first volume of *The Secret Doctrine?* No; he will not do that. He will seek some common ground of fact and idea, and, quite haltingly, perhaps, endeavor to suggest in his own words an approach to the question under discussion that may possibly provoke further interest and inquiry.

After a time of attempting to present Theosophy to others, the student realizes that every man of conviction, whatever his persuasion, has found enough truth in his beliefs to *work* for them, and only a real discovery of his own will cause him to adopt another basis. He is devoted to his present ideas because he is busy

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NOTE.—This article first appeared in THEOSOPHY 30:241.

applying them, and he will not respect Theosophical ideas unless he can feel in the way they are presented the same practical conviction. He would, for example, be a courageous Theosophist who would undertake to discuss his philosophy with a Father Damien. So often the student realizes that some friend or acquintance is in many ways a better theosophist than he is himself. The friend, from all appearances, is practicing what he knows with all his heart, while the student, so it seems to him, daily grows more painfully aware of his own shortcomings. He asks himself, "How is it that I, with this noble philosophy, accomplish so little, while my friend, who has no philosophy at all, is able to do so much?" This is one of the great mysteries of human nature, one that the student must work out for himself.

One practical assistance in the task of transforming Theosophical learning into knowledge is to have a clear purpose in mind while studying the teaching. The undercurrent of thought should always be, "How can I make this idea clear to someone else? Could I explain this by using a simple illustration? The mind so trained runs naturally to applications; it sees Theosophy in every man's work and field of experience. To "talk Theosophy" no longer means employing a particular vocabulary, but the spread of a few leading ideas, no matter what their incidental garb.

It is important, also, to beware of Theosophical "shibboleths." There are forms of pat expression that students sometimes repeat until their meaning is virtually lost. If, in thinking about a problem, a set of words comes to mind mechanically, it is well to attempt another form of expression. Explanations which have crystalized into familiar word-formations need to be broken up and recast with fresh and larger meaning. The student whose habits of thought and forms of speech are not constantly being regenerated by further study is in danger of falling into a Theosophical rut. Yesterday's truth gets stale if today has not added to it. The Theosophist, less than any one else, can "rest on his laurels."

Another warning may be entered in connection with all metaphysical studies. Metaphysics provides systematic description of the nature of planes and principles above the physical, reaching upward, in progressive abstraction, to the primary Cause of manifested existence. The teaching of the seven principles is metaphysical; the various planes and states of consciousness are meta-

physical conceptions. While within each man are the substantial realities to which these abstract ideas correspond, the student has no *knowledge* of such recondite aspects of the philosophy until he can literally control the principles under consideration. Knowledge is conscious power, nothing less.

The student should realize that he has only abstract and theoretical information about the principles until he begins to identify and control their operation, in some degree, within his own being. If, after reading the chapter on Manas in *The Ocean of Theosophy,* he has never caught his own mind performing the "natural motions" described by Mr. Judge, and from that time forth made a deliberate effort to direct his intellectual energy, then, to him, Chapter Seven is still a mere "dead letter." Mr. Judge's injunction, given elsewhere, to try to see a deep occult significance in every event, however trivial, is another way of saying that we need to practice in ourselves the philosophy we study in theory.

Theosophy has indeed an answer to every question, but it is not the Theosophy that is printed in books that gives us knowledge. The answers in the books are rather the keys to mysteries locked within ourselves, and for learning to become knowledge, the keys have to be turned.

Realizing the Dream

What can be said or done that will compel us to slough off inertia and complacency and take our stand for the human being against his unnumbered enemies? If only we could see the brokenness in each of us and the necessity for relationships; if we could realize our talent for bridging chasms that have always been and always will be. If only we could rise up against the killers of man's dream. But, sometimes, that killer of dreams is in us and we do not know how to rid ourseves of it.

It may be a lie: this sanctity of the human being, this importance of man the individual, this right of the child to grow, but when it is proved so, there will no longer be an earth to witness the lie's triumph and no men here to mourn the loss of their dream.

—Lillian Smith

letters · questions · comment

In the after-death states, the separation of lower energies from the higher occurs naturally—involuntarily in fact. Why are these quite different tendencies difficult to recognize during life?

The condition of the Ego after death, when it no longer has transactions with other beings, affords the opportunity to assimilate the experience of the life just completed. But it can initiate neither the causes which lead to learning nor the effort to know which changes experience to knowledge—because this kind of evolution is accomplished only in concert with all the other entities which contribute to our existence in incarnation.

The whole problem seems to focus on the fact that the Ego, or Manas, though one in essence, becomes dual upon incarnation. In the *Glossary* H.P.B. gives the meaning of "Ego" as "Self." It means "the consciousness in man 'I am I'—or the feeling of 'I-am-ship'." She says further: "Esoteric philosophy teaches the existence of two *Egos* in man, the mortal or *personal,* and the Higher, the Divine and the Impersonal, calling the former 'personality' and the latter 'Individuality'." Both the higher and the lower ego have the sense of being "I," which makes our waking consciousness vulnerable to an illusory identification with matter. Thus few are aware that the Higher Ego is the source of all power to act, the lower being but its reflection in matter.

The raw materials of evolution, so to speak, are available to us only when the mind is in contact with matter, and this is accomplished by fusion with the principle of desire. In *The Secret Doctrine* H.P.B. says:

> The two higher principles *can have no individuality on Earth,* cannot be *man,* unless there is (*a*) the Mind, the *Manas-Ego,* to cognize itself, and (*b*) the terrestrial *false* personality, or the body of egotistical desires and personal Will, to cement the whole, as if round a pivot (which it is, truly), to the physical form of man. It is the *Fifth* and the *Fourth* principles—*Manas* and *Kama rupa*—that contain the dual personality: the

> real immortal Ego (*if it assimilates itself to the two higher*Q and the false and transitory personality, the *mayavi* or astral body, so-called, or the *animal-human* Soul—the two having to be closely blended for purposes of a *full* terrestrial existence. Incarnate the Spiritual Monad of a Newton grafted on that of the greatest saint on earth—in a physical body the most perfect you can think of—*i.e.*, in a two or even a three-principled body composed of its *Sthula Sarira,* prana (life principle), and *linga sarira*—and, if it lacks its middle and fifth principles, you will have created *an idiot*—at best a beautiful, soul-less, empty and unconscious appearance. *"Cogito—ergo sum"*—can find no room in the brain of such a creature, not on this plane, at any rate. (II, 241-42.)

H.P.B. states that the grossest matter is not physical but kamic. She also says that the focus for human evolution is in states of consciousness, not in the building up of physical forms. All these conditions are present only when we are in a body. When death comes, the energies which held the principles in such close embrace are reversed, becoming the active agent of their dispersal. The lower elements return to nature. The Kamic elements, devoid of the cohesion of mind, are finally reduced to the seeds (skandhas) of a future rebirth into matter. The immortal man, the divine pilgrim, withdraws into the subjectivity of Devachan, there to assimilate those elements of the personality which are homogeneous with it.

The separation that takes place in the after-death states, therefore, does not afford the same opportunity for evolution as exists in a body; nor does the realization of these distinctions during life involve the same kind of separation. It might be argued that a certain unity of principle prevails throughout nature, so that we strive to accomplish, as a matter of conscious control and without loss of the unifying vehicle, what the forces of nature, functioning through these basic processes, do "automatically" for us when we leave it.

Conscious distinction during life between action expressive of the higher ego and merely personal activity involves an increase of deliberate choice in respect to all behavior. This is difficult, and the personality is an expert moralist and dissembler. Discrimination comes slowly, but is the source of all right action. Perfection in action might be suggested in the *Gita* by Krishna's statement: "I establish this whole universe with a portion of myself and yet

remain separate." Strengthening the sense of "I" as the eternal thinker leads the incarnating Ego to regard his desires only as stepping-stones to be learned from, and he is less and less impelled to action *by* them. This permits a further incarnation of Manas. Becoming fully conscious on this plane the Ego acquires spiritual identity and wholeness of vision—unconfined, free.

Another way to examine the difference between life and the after-death states would be to regard mind as the discriminator and the reality of the outer world as consisting of the will of all the beings we perceive of whatever degree. In the after-death states, where Ego is unfolding its memory scroll, the mind as a *discriminating* principle does not see the unity of spirit, or will in action, in terms of this diversity. To separate the lower energies from the higher during life, then, would mean that we must make the lower, personal man the passive tool of the higher individuality, in much the same sense as the materials and skills of the artist are entirely subject to his inspiration—remembering always that the artist's genius finds expression only through the resulting work of art. Confusion of identity arises only if the artist looks to his materials to provide the inspiration instead of his using them as the medium of its expression.

The purpose to be achieved in life, then, is not to isolate one kind of energy from another, but to discover the proper function of each within the fully conscious man. In this way all manifestations of universal Will might be in harmony. Robert Crosbie spoke to this point in *Answers to Questions on the Ocean of Theosophy* (p. 109). He said:

> Will is the energy of Consciousness expressed in action, on any plane of manifestation. There are many aspects of the Will, from the ordinary one which is "the will to live" and is expressed in the automatic physical action, such as the heart-beat, digestion, etc.; that of the actions following on ordinary thought, desires and wants; that which is developed by various forms of practice; to the highest phase, that of the Spiritual Will. This phase is developed by true unselfishness, a sincere and full desire to be guided, ruled and assisted by the Higher Self, and to do that which, and suffer or enjoy whatever, the Higher Self has in store for one by way of discipline or experience.

WESTERN OCCULTISM

WHEN our own internal determination is to know the truth, for the sake of truth, we have taken a step. It signifies for each one that his own real Self is, by his trend of thought, finding a channel for expression. This will grow.

Do not let the conditions which surround you, contrasted with what you can see, weigh upon you. All that is necessary is for each one to do his duty by every duty. None is small and unimportant.

Duty is not what other people think we ought to do. Duty is what we ourselves see to do. To fulfil that is the great desideratum.

Attachment to things or results comes by thinking about them. We can have no attachment for a thing we don't think about; nor any like or dislike. While doing the best we know by every act and present duty, we need not attach ourselves to any particular form of result. Leave results to the Law: they will surely come in accordance with *it*.

Having done our duty as we see it, we should resign all personal interest in the results. Whatever the results, each can take them as that which his true Self desired.

It is motive alone that marks the line between black and white. But what is needed in the world is *knowledge*. Good motive may save moral character, but it does not ensure those thoughts and acts which make for the highest good of humanity.

Theosophy is the path of knowledge. It was given out in order, among other things, that good motive and wisdom might go hand in hand.

If it is remembered that the purpose of life is to learn, and that life is all made up of learning, the ordinary duties of everyday existence are seen to be the means by which we learn many things.

A mental bias cannot be changed even by one so wise and powerful as a Master. If the one in error cannot see his fault, nothing can be done. Another life in a humbler station, the lesson may be learned. As I understand it, Masters cannot interfere with Karma.

NOTE.—From the saying of Robert Crosbie (reprinted from THEOSOPHY, volume 16).

It is not what we go through that counts; it is what we learn from it. No one can know anything for another; each has to know for himself. No vicarious atonement, no vicarious transmission of knowledge is possible.

But the direction in which knowledge lies may be pointed out; the steps which will lead us in that direction may be shown. That only can be done by Those who have passed that way before. It is exactly what is being done.

They say that one phase of the path is the cheerful and effective performance of small, plain duties.

The thing to do is to meet anything and everything exactly as it comes. We need not take the position of providing for a "rainy day," which is just figuring for *ourselves*. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Take care of today. Never mind the next hour. Take care of this one. Take care of every moment, every hour as it comes along, fearing nothing, doubting nothing, in full confidence, relying on the Law of our own natures. That is duty.

It is not the best thing to rely upon any *living person;* I mean to the extent of idealizing him. For if such an one should be swept into seeming darkness for a time, its effect might not be good for us, and might dishearten. In reality the Masters are Those to whom we should turn our thoughts.

Those who are really "touched" by the inner fire are usually full of the idea of work for humanity. The desire to be and to do comes out strongly and clears the way for true and permanent growth, with its seasons of expansion and retardation—which means growth and solidification—necessary processes, as we see, in nature.

There is no need to grope, nor stagger, nor stray; for the chart that has led many to the goal is in our hands in the philosophy of Theosophy.

Do not be too anxious. Abide the time when your own inner demands shall open the doors. Those Great Ones see every pure-hearted, earnest disciple, and are ready to give a turn to the key of knowledge when the time in the disciple's progress is ripe.

No one who strives to tread the path is left unhelped; the Great Ones see his light, and he is given what is needed for his best development. There are no veils on that plane of seeing.

The help must be of that nature which leaves perfect freedom of thought and action—otherwise the lessons would not be learned. It will come for the most part in ordinary ways, and from one or another of the companions with whom you were possibly connected in other lives, and whom your soul will recognize.

There may, and often does come a time, when one feels like "standing on nothing, in nothing, and about to topple over." The centre of consciousness has been changed; old landmarks are slipping away, and sometimes black doubt ensues. Doubt and fear belong only to the personal consciousness; the real Perceiver, the Higher Ego, has neither. The *Gita* says: "Cast aside all doubt and fight on."

And never for one moment think that you are not going on with your journey.

It is well for us if we can always have deep down in our heart of hearts the consciousness of the nearness of Masters; by Their very nature They must be near to every true aspirant.

The Great White Lodge exists for the service of humanity; They need and welcome workers in the world. Is it strange, then, that the light of souls attracted towards the path of unselfishness should receive Their cognition, and when deserved—when needed—such succor as Karma permits accorded?

They, Themselves, have written: "Ingratitude is not one of our vices"; and while we may not claim gratitude from Them, yet we may be sure that compassion absolute is there, and with it the understanding of the nature and needs of each aspirant.

The Universal Solvent

Theosophy being the way that leads to truth, in every religion as in every science, occultism is, so to say, the touchstone and universal solvent. It is the thread of Ariadne given by the master to the disciple who ventures into the labyrinth of the mysteries of being; the torch that lights him through the dangerous maze of life, for ever the enigma of the Sphinx. But the light thrown by this torch can be discerned only by the eye of the awakened soul—by our spiritual senses; it blinds the eye of the materialist as the sun blinds that of the owl.

—H. P. Blavatsky

THE DWELLER OF THE THRESHOLD

HAS such a being any existence? Has any one ever seen it? Are there many or several, and has it any sex?

Such are the questions asked by nearly all students who read theosophical books. Some of those who all their life believed in fairies in secret and in the old tales of giants, have proceeded to test the question by calling upon the horrid shade to appear and freeze their blood with the awful eyes that Bulwer Lytton has made so famous in his "Zanoni." But the Dweller is not to be wooed in such a way, and has not appeared at all, but by absolute silence leads the invoker to at last scout the idea altogether.

But this same inquirer then studies theosophical books with diligence, and enters after a time on the attempt to find out his own inner nature. All this while the Dweller has waited, and, indeed, we may say, in complete ignorance as yet of the neophyte's existence. When the study has proceeded far enough to wake up long dormant senses and tendencies, the Dweller begins to feel that such a person as this student is at work. Certain influences are then felt, but not always with clearness, and at first never ascribed to the agency of what had long ago been relegated to the lumber-room of exploded superstitions. The study goes still farther and yet farther, until the awful Thing has revealed itself; and when that happens, it is not a superstition nor is it disbelieved. It can then never be gotten rid of, but will stay as a constant menace until it is triumphed over *and left behind*.

When Glyndon was left by Mejnour in the old castle in Italy, he found two vases which he had received directions not to open. But disobeying these he took out the stoppers, and at once the room was filled with intoxication, and soon the awful, loathsome creature appeared whose blazing eyes shone with malignant glare and penetrated to Glyndon's soul with a rush of horror such as he had never known.

In this story Lytton desired to show that the opening of the vases is like the approach of an enquirer to the secret recesses of

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his own nature. He opens the receptacles, and at first is full of joy and a sort of intoxication due to the new solutions offered for every problem in life and to the dimly seen vistas of power and advancement that open before him. If the vases *are kept open long enough,* the Dweller of the Threshold surely appears, and no man is exempt from the sight. Goodness is not sufficient to prevent its appearance, because even the good man who finds a muddy place in the way to his destination must of necessity pass through it to reach the end.

We must ask next, What is the Dweller? It is the combined evil influence that is the result of the wicked thoughts and acts of the age in which any one may live, and it assumes to each student a definite shape at each appearance, being always either of one sort or changing each time. So that with one it may be as Bulwer Lytton pictures it, or with another only a dread horror, or even of any other sort of shape. It is specialized for each student and given its form by the tendencies and natural physical and psychical combinations that belong to his family and nation.

Where, then, does it dwell? is the very natural inquiry which will follow. It dwells in its own plane, and that may be understood in this manner.

Around each person are planes or zones, beginning with spirit and running down to gross matter. These zones extend, within their lateral boundaries, all around the being. That is to say, if we figure ourselves as being in the centre of a sphere, we will find that there is no way of escaping or skipping any one zone, be-because it extends in every direction until we pass its lateral boundary.

When the student has at last gotten hold of a real aspiration and some glimmer of the blazing goal of truth where Masters stand, and has also aroused the determination to know and to be, the whole bent of his nature, day and night, is to reach out beyond the limitations that hitherto had fettered his soul. No sooner does he begin thus to step a little forward, than he reaches the zone just beyond mere bodily and mental sensations. At first the minor dwellers of the threshold are aroused, and they in temptation, in bewilderment, in doubt or confusion, assail him. He only feels the effect, for they do not reveal themselves as shapes. But persistence in the work takes the inner man farther along, and with that progress comes a realization to the outer mind of the experi-

ences met, until at last he has waked up the whole force of the evil power that naturally is arrayed against the good end he has set before him. Then the Dweller takes what form it may. That it does take some definite shape or impress itself with palpable horror is a fact testified to by many students.

One of those related to me that he saw it as an enormous slug with evil eyes whose malignancy could not be described. As he retreated—that is, grew fearful—it seemed joyful and portentous, and when retreat was complete it was not. Then he fell further back in thought and action, having occasionally moments of determination to retrieve his lost ground. Whenever these came to him, the dreadful slug again appeared, only to leave him when he had given up again his aspirations. And he knew that he was only making the fight, if ever he should take it up again, all the harder.

Another says that he has seen the Dweller concentrated in the apparent form of a dark and sinister-looking man, whose slightest motions, whose merest glance, expressed the intention and ability to destroy the student's reason, and only the strongest effort of will and faith could dispel the evil influence. And the same student at other times has felt it as a vague, yet terrible, horror that seemed to enwrap him in its folds. Before this he has retreated for the time to prepare himself by strong self-study to be pure and brave for the next attack.

These things are not the same as the temptations of Saint Anthony. In his case he seems to have induced an hysterical erotic condition, in which the unvanquished secret thoughts of his own heart found visible appearance.

The Dweller of the Threshold is not the product of the brain, but is an influence found in a plane that is extraneous to the student, but in which his success or failure will be due to his own purity. It is not a thing to be dreaded by mere dilettanti theosophists; and no earnest one who feels himself absolutely called to work persistently to the highest planes of development for the good of humanity, and not for his own, need fear aught that heaven or hell holds.

—EUSEBIO URBAN

on the lookout

Mind More than Intellect

In an article in the *New York Times* for April 12, Theodore Roszak writes in behalf of the "dangerous proposition" that there is much more to human nature than current scientific ideology is willing to take seriously. He finds it encouraging that, even while "the scientific style of mind has become the one form of experience our society is willing to dignify as knowledge," not only the young but also an increasing number of troubled middle-class adults are searching, however ineptly, for an aspect of being which they feel lacks expression in their lives. This, Roszak identifies as the irrational, little-understood half of our minds—the source of man's highest inspirations, as well as, by inversion, of our all-too-familiar savageries. He says:

> How can I argue more clearly than I (and so many others) have that it is precisely this undimensioned sense of the mind which, with tragic irony, evokes the destructive passions by its austere refusal to experience the irrational discriminately and generously for what it is—a rich spectrum of life—enhancing human possibilities?

Behind Protest Movements

Much of the search for the neglected side of man's being takes the form of social dissent:

> This brave effort to alter the cultural basis of our politics is really far more important than any single political project which the dissenters have taken on. For in the long run, it is not nearly enough that this or that vice of American society or the capitalist system should be corrected; it is the essential rightness, sanity and viability of the urban industrial life-style as a whole that must be questioned.

As indications of this questioning, he cites the increase in the desire for responsible individuality and the widespread efforts to learn to live on a simpler, more ecologically harmonious scale, as reflected in the popularity of the *Whole Earth Catalog*. Mr. Roszak continues:

> By the time the *Catalog* appeared, it had become clear to many radicals that no movement which pitted itself against the world-dominant urban industrial culture could be launched from the university campuses. Instead, one had to pioneer the inner frontiers of urban and rural America by way of exemplary experiment. One had to prove that there were better and freer ways to live, and in so doing begin to sap the foundations of the technocracy by a steady, workaday withdrawal of allegiance and dependence. A long-term project, though history happens with startling speed in our time. In any case, the decisive factor in any revolution is not that it change things suddenly, but that it change them deeply—and make the changes last.

Deeper Resources

A distinctive feature of this kind of change is that it does not require the same conforming action from everyone in order to succeed. It begins with small changes that may be initiated by any individual. Mr. Roszak's criticism of science as a world-view implies objection to the scientific psychology which ignores that part of the human mind from which the impulse to self-determination arises. He says:

> Perhaps what is most offensive about my treatment of repressive rationality is that I have insisted on reaching beyond the usual, platitudinous appeal for "psychic wholeness"—an exhortation which arouses no ire because it identifies no well-defined social or cultural obstacles in our path. Instead, I have insisted that there is something radically and systematically wrong with our culture, a flaw that lies deeper than any class or race analysis probes and which frustrates our best efforts to achieve wholeness. I am convinced it is our ingrained commitment to the scientific picture of nature that hangs us up. . . .
>
> Undeniably, those who defend rationality speak for a valuable human quality. But they often seem not to realize that Reason as they honor it is the god-word of a specific and highly impassioned ideology handed down to us from our ancestors of the Enlightenment as part of a total cultural and political program. Tied to that ideology is an aggressive dedication to the urban industrialization of the world and to the scientist's universe as the only sane reality. And tied to the global expansion of urban industrialism is an unavoidable technocratic elitism.

True "Life of Reason"

The current fascination with exotic religious practices and psy-

chological experimentation, Roszak believes, is not sufficient cause for disparaging the effort to discover and map this unknown territory. He also speaks of the anxieties felt by modern "rationalists" when asked to give serious attention to the feeling and intuitive side of man's nature:

> Perhaps that is the measure of how tenaciously what Blake called single vision grips us—that so many of the best minds among us can only experience the movement of the transcendent energies within them as a diabolical summons. What can one do to quiet their fears? Stroke their fretful brow, perhaps, and remind them that this very passion for the truth and human-kindness which they call the life of Reason has been smuggled into their personalities from the depths of the irrational. It is what survives in them of an ethical conviction long ago implanted in human culture by numberless prophets, seers and sages, who did not compute their way to the Good.

"Rational" and "Irrational"

It should be helpful, here, to review what is said in the Theosophical literature concerning the "rational" and "irrational" aspects of man's nature. Serious difficulties arise unless it is understood that there are two sorts of "irrationality." In *The Key to Theosophy* (pp. 101-2), H. P. Blavatsky observes that the light of Atma, the Divine essence, enters man only through Buddhi, "its vehicle and direct emanation." And this, she adds, is the "secret meaning of the assertions of almost all the ancient philosophers, when they said that 'the *rational* part of man's soul' never entered wholly into man, but only overshadowed him more or less through the irrational *spiritual* Soul or *Buddhi*." ("Rational," here, she says in a footnote, means something emanating from the Eternal Wisdom.) The Inquirer remarks that he had thought only the Animal Soul was irrational, to which H.P.B. replies that the animal soul is irrational by reason of its positive differentiations, while Buddhi is irrational because it is passive and undifferentiated. Again, in a footnote, H.P.B. explains that *Buddhi* as a pure emanation from Universal Mind is irrational since it has no individual reason of its own, on this plane of matter, but gets its rational qualities from *Manas*. In these days when so many are groping for an inward light—for understanding which reaches beyond the scope of mechanistic reasoning alone—the distinction made in the Theosophical metaphysics between the higher and lower "irrationality" takes on crucial importance. Psychological and moral

mysteries will surely beset our society until there begins to be greater understanding along these lines.

Basis of Acupuncture

A report in the *Los Angeles Times* (April 11) tells of the use of acupuncture in the treatment of drug addiction, it being said that Hong Kong doctors have been able by this means to eliminate withdrawal symptoms in addicts denied drugs. Some of the patients, the report maintains, were able to abstain from drugs completely. Among the specialists in Hong Kong there is apparent agreement that acupuncture "works" for this purpose, but the *Times* report also suggests that a general theoretical basis in modern terms is lacking for acupuncture, whether practiced in China or the West. This makes pertinent the foundation offered by Jane F. Lee, a medical doctor, in *California Medicine* for last August:

> Many modern scientific theories have been advanced on the mechanisms of action of acupuncture but none are as widely accepted by acupuncturists as the ancient Chinese rationale. The Chinese believed that all things in nature are part of one essence, the *"Tchi"* (vital energy), the universal principle of the cosmos. Within the *Tchi* are contained the opposed forces of Yin and Yang. Health of body and mind is dependent upon a balance of these two principles. The time, weather, season, environment and emotions are all involved in maintaining and disturbing this balance. The doctrine of the five elements—wood, fire, earth, metal, water—is closely related to the Yin Yang principle, since the Yin Yang energy may be strengthened or weakened by these five elements. The two groups of internal organs, *Tsang* (heart, liver, spleen, lungs, kidneys) and *Fu* (stomach, large intestine, small intestine, gall bladder and pericardium) are connected by twelve main channels or meridians on each side of the body through which flows the vital energy (*Tchi*). In addition, two special channels—one front, one back—run sagittally down the midline. There are interconnecting channels between these main meridians. Along the meridians are 364 points for needle insertion.

The *Los Angeles Times* observes, perhaps irrelevantly, that, while American and British physicians will need more comprehensive studies to prove that acupuncture really works, "it is unlikely to be derided, as it might have been a decade ago." Whatever the virtues of this age-old practice prove to be for the modern world, it seems to suggest a subtle, inner organism—the astral body—capable of exercising control over the physical body.

"Cosmic Costing"

By raising to a cosmic scale the sins of omission in our ecological relationships with the earth, Buckminster Fuller points to the unwarranted assumptions in current economic views and theories (*World* for February 27). There is for example our attitude toward the use of petroleum:

> When humans discovered the petroleum, they wrongly assumed that it was absolutely free and belonged to the finder. Humans take into account only the cost of pumping, processing, and distributing the oil. Anyone should be able to sell a million dollars for fifty cents! Only cosmic costing properly accounts for the entirely interdependent electrochemical, ecological relationships of Earth's biological evolution and cosmic intertransformative regeneration in general, as well as for the parts played gravitationally and radiationally in the astrototality within which our miniscule planet Earth and its miniscule star Sun are interfunctionally secreted. Cosmic costing makes utterly ludicrous the selfish and fearfully contrived "wealth" games being reverentially played by humanity aboard Earth.

Responsibility of Man

Reminding us that the Sun does not demand payment for the energy it supplies to our earth, he goes on to say that human survival may depend upon our learning to do our part:

> The stars are trying to tell humanity to awake and prosper and to consciously assume the important cosmic responsibilities for which it was designed. Since realization and fulfillment of that responsibility involve evolutionary discovery by humanity of the cosmic stature of its mind and the inconsequentiality of its muscle, the planting of humans on Earth may not bear fruit.

In pointing this out, however, he pleads for the extension of man's mind to take in the cosmos as a vast whole.

An Old Idea

It is easy to forgive Mr. Fuller his extraordinary vocabulary, which sometimes approaches jargon, for the sake of the metaphysical splendors it is meant to embody. Here, he is declaring for man's participatory life in the universe, as representing the factor of intelligence and the capacity for understanding and deliberate cooperation. Man, according to this engineering genius, has a role to play in the cosmic process, and he keeps calling

upon his fellows to come to a realization of what this role may be. The idea is ancient, philosophical, and true, even though the idiom is at times forbidding. For this reason, Fuller's influence in the long run may prove to have been philosophical more than anything else.

New Respect for "Home"

Saturday Review of Education for April reports on a new means for parents to help bridge the gap between home and school environments ("Return of Mom" by Sara Stein and Carter Smith). Parents have long been encouraged to participate in their children's education by taking part in activities related to school functions—choosing teachers, developing curriculum, assisting teachers with children. This article describes a new emphasis, involving experimental alternatives to more and earlier pre-school for children, since the long-range benefits of "schooling" for the very young are now increasingly questioned.

As the most intimate and continuous focus for developing relationships of many kinds, the home is where the most lasting changes should be introduced, some educators feel. They believe that teachers should assist the parents instead of parents assisting the teachers. Aid is offered through home visits to help mothers make the best educational use of their relationships with their children, while they are still at pre-school age. This does not mean use of carefuly devised materials and instruction such as are provided even in informal classroom situations. As the authors of the *SR* article say:

> The task of the home visitor is not to identify deficiencies, but to find out what a mother really needs. What bugs mothers? Certainly not their child's inability to master concepts of "same" and "different" or order objects by size, but most probably squabbling, teasing, noise, messiness, whining, nagging, and wildness.

A Natural "Home Curriculum"

This approach seems an advance over past practice that has neglected the possibilities for learning that are constantly provided at home, assuming that "real education" only takes place in the classroom. As a British psychologist, John Bowlby, put it, "Children thrive better in bad homes than in good institutions." The *Saturday Review* adds:

> Parent-involvement programs that are based in the home have fewer of the old structures to tear down. They can feel freer to follow the parents' lead. In the last few years at least two hundred home-based programs to help parents help kids have been created throughout the country. And several have shown promising results.

Another means of breaking down the barrier between home and school is a "do-it-yourself home curriculum":

> In the form of 200 recipe-sized cards, it shows parents everything from how to make toys and how to keep a child occupied through a long wait at the clinic, to ways to include children on household chores. The "While You're At It" cards are based on Burton White's findings that the most effective mother is the one who has learned to respond to her child in a natural way as she goes about her daily chores. Sitting down for a prescribed hour of "educational games" puts a strain on both mother and child. But working the child's education into the mother's life "while she's at it" is an easy and fun way to make learning an all-the-time event.

One may think, however, that the sort of education represented by these "findings" has been in its own way a part of almost every culture in the past, when ways of life were more natural and spontaneous. It may come as a compensation for our own troubled times that disturbing changes now lead to conscious restoration of beneficent practices once discarded as "old-fashioned."

"Peace Studies"

The authors of "The Postwar Pursuit of Peace Studies" (*Saturday Review of Education* for May) survey the prospects of such programs in academic institutions in the wake of the Vietnamese war, and find them encouraging. Although such classes undoubtedly received an impetus from the antiwar movement, enrollment after the cease-fire agreement is reported to be still high. Alan Geyer, of Colgate University, believes that exploration of why mankind is constantly at war and of alternatives to war will continue to be a matter of concern. He sees the nominal end of the war as an opportunity to dissociate the study of peace from political movements or specific war issues and to "develop more of an intellectual base." At Colgate, in part of the program, the instructor presents the students with conflict situations which they attempt to solve non-violently.

Betty Reardon, director of an organization that provides study

programs on peace for both elementary and secondary schools, believes that the study of international relations as taught in most schools is "bankrupt." The method of picking out an international dispute, discussing it "objectively," and possibly suggesting some solutions, should be replaced with an approach that begins with the students' own thinking. They should decide what they would like to see in the future and then figure out how to achieve it. The strength of this method is that it leads the mind to explore and synthesize the knowledge gained from many studies.

Wanted: Philosophical Psychology

But the study of peace bids fair to become as "academic" as any other subject unless it can throw light on the sources of human motivations and show how to bring about changes. This requires a rationale for man's nobler impulses that will support the faith of men that peaceful resolution of conflicts is an attainable ideal. This sort of "higher psychology" is not yet part of educational thinking. An article in *Manas* for April 25, "The Roots of Character," suggests why:

> Man, in the modern conception, is an object, not an initiator or subject; he is acted upon, he does not originate. *He* does not generate as a causal agency, but merely responds to external forces and conditioning influences. The few who have their own intuitions of authentic selfhood develop grounds of independent action, but are reluctant to go against the grain of their times with theories which are likely to be rejected. All social theory tends to derive from political philosophy, and not from conceptions of the intrinsic nature of man. The emphasis in ethical thinking has been almost entirely on the arrangement of relationships among men. Not just men, but just *systems,* has been the objective.
>
> But if the will to act well, justly, and wisely has become weak, what then can be expected from even the best laid plans, the most carefully devised systems? This is a question that is never asked, the assumption being that the moral qualities of human beings are constant, while social schemes are the variables which need attention.

Threatened Rain Forests

Insight into the range of man's impact on the natural environment is provided by consideration of several recent articles on conservation from widely differing standpoints. Three scientists in the department of botany at the National University of Mexico

plead in *Science* (Sept. 1, 1972) that international conservation measures be immediately taken to prevent the extinction of the rain forests—areas of immense variety of evergreens, mosses and clinging plants—located only where appropriate climatic conditions prevail. These unique systems depend for their perpetuation on the continued reproduction of the primary growth—the tall trees which provide the conditions essential to the other plant forms. The botanists say that the system of shifting small areas of cultivation from one site to another, once used by primitive farmers with no more lasting effects than minor natural disturbances, has been abandoned in favor of permanent cultivation of large areas of land. As a result, the primary growth necessary to the maintenance of the rain forest is unable to regenerate, dooming the whole system to extinction. This precarious balance, typical of certain warm and humid regions, makes the rain forests more vulnerable to great or long-lasting changes than are similar species in dry or temperate climates. Besides the contribution of the rain-forests to the balance of the world-wide ecological system, the scientists point out that their loss would mean destruction of the record of millions of years of biological evidence and thousands of species of plants, many of them not to be found elsewhere.

Working with Nature

It is not true that the use of land by man necessarily does harm; damage comes from the mindless neglect of the natural rhythms upon which its life depends. A passage from an article by René Dubos, in *Smithsonian* for last December, reinforces this point:

> Man's influence on European landscapes has been exerted for so long that it has created a second nature, not always readily differentiated from primeval nature. Like the rest of northern Europe, the Ile-de-France region where I grew up was almost completely wooded at the beginning of the Christian era. Trees still grow luxuriantly there wherever they are given a chance. In all directions around Paris, there are large forests such as those of Rambouillet, Fontainebleau, Villers-Conterets, Compiegne. . . .
>
> Ever since the primeval forest was first cleared by Neolithic settlers, the Ile-de-France has been acquiring a humanized quality which transcends its natural endowments. To this day, the land has remained fertile, even though it has been in continuous use for more than 2,000 years. Far from being exhausted by intensive agriculture, it still supports a great diver-

sity of human settlements.

What I have just stated about the Ile-de-France is applicable to many other parts of the world. The prodigious labors of settlers and farmers have generated as astonishing diversity of ecosystems which appear natural even though they are of human origin. The "enclosures" of East Anglia, the *bocages* of French Normandy and Brittany are essentially man-made but their hedges and ditches harbor an immense variety of trees, shrubs and grasses, of insects, fish, rodents and song-birds.

Simulated "Prison"

A research project designed to isolate, if possible, the psychological effects of prison life on both inmates and guards is described by Philip Zimbardo, a Stanford psychologist, in the April 8 *New York Times Magazine*. Because of the secrecy maintained by prison officials and the virtual impossibility of distinguishing between the natural tendencies of each individual and those brought on by incarceration, a mock prison was constructed in the basement of Stanford's psychology building. Dr. Zimbardo and his colleagues were aided by twenty-one student volunteers who had been selected on the basis of interviews and personality tests and were judged "emotionally stable, physically healthy, mature, law-abiding citizens." The roles of inmate or guard were assigned randomly, half as guards and half as prisoners.

Unexpected Results

Although some of the worst features of prisons—physical brutality, racism, indefinite confinement—were not part of this experiment, an effort was made to create a situation which would simulate the basic psychological conditions of imprisonment. The undertaking undoubtedly raised more questions than it answered about where and how tendencies originate, but it also clarified the fact that anti-social actions are too complex to be attributed to either bad conditions or innate human nature. They are the product of a complicated and continuous interaction between numerous factors, the critical one being the power of choice. In this respect, the experiment became so engrossing, and the problems created by the confinement and the interaction of prisoners and guards so "real," that the project had to be terminated after six days instead of the planned two weeks. A note in Dr. Zimbardo's report is typical of the reactions of all the participants:

> While I believe that it was necessary for *staff* [me] to enact the warden role, at least some of the time, I am startled by the ease with which I could turn off my sensitivity and concern for others in a "good cause."

Roles Became "Real"

Dr. Zimbardo suggests some interesting conclusions from the experience, relating to how we, as a society, interpret behavior. He explained the "true to life" feeling that the experiment generated as a result of the psychological assumptions the situation seemed to reinforce, and of the network of relationships the participants built up which came to dominate their behavior. His comments on this indicate that we are continually re-creating our environment by these assumptions:

> The pathology observed in this study cannot be reasonably attributed to pre-existing personality differences of the subjects, that option being eliminated by our selection procedures and random assignment. Rather, the subjects' abnormal social and personal reactions are best seen as a product of their transaction with an environment that supported the behavior that would be pathological in other settings, but was "appropriate" in this prison. Had we observed comparable reactions in a real prison, the psychiatrist undoubtedly would have been able to attribute any prisoner's behavior to characteristic defects or personality maladjustment, while critics of the prison system would have been quick to label the guards as "psychopathic." This tendency to locate the source of behavior disorders inside a particular person or group underestimates the power of situational forces.

"Prisons of the Mind"

> You cannot be a prisoner if no one will be your guard, and you cannot be a prison guard if no one takes you or your prison seriously. Therefore, over time a perverted symbiotic relationship developed. As the guards became more aggressive, prisoners became more passive; assertion by the guards led to dependency in the prisoners; self-aggrandizement was met with self-deprecation, authority with helplessness, and the counterpart of the guards' sense of mastery and control was the depression and hopelessness witnessed in the prisoners.
>
> The most disturbing implication of our research comes from the parallels between what occurred in that basement mock prison and daily experiences in our own lives—and we presume yours. The physical institution of prison is but a concrete and steel metaphor for the existence of more pervasive, albeit less

obvious, prisons of the mind that all of us daily create, populate and perpetuate. We speak here of the prisons of racism, sexism, despair, shyness, "neurotic hang-ups" and the like. The social convention of marriage, as one example, becomes for many couples a state of imprisonment, in which one partner agrees to be prisoner or guard, forcing or allowing the other to play the reciprocal role—invariably without making the contract explicit.

To what extent do we allow ourselves to become imprisoned by docilely accepting the roles others assign us or, indeed, choose to remain prisoners because being passive and dependent frees us from the need to act and be responsible for our actions? The prison of fear constructed in the delusions of the paranoid is no less confining or less real than the cell that every shy person erects to limit his own freedom in anxious anticipation of being ridiculed and rejected by his guards—often guards of his own making.

The experiment illustrates how pervasive are the qualities what Theosophists sometimes refer to as the "race mind." Cre tive action that results from self-determination originates in sense of "I" that is beyond the definitions of environment.

For the Record

A California Theosophist has suggested that individuals mig help to stem the tide of pseudo-occult interest by contributing le ters to editors of newspapers containing brief quotations fro Madame Blavatsky's writings, making clear both the opportuniti and the obligations of genuine occultism. Following is an examp of an extract which was printed by a local newspaper:

Occultism is not magic, though magic is one of its tools. Occultism is not the acquirement of powers, whether psychic or intellectual, though both are its servants. Neither is occultism the pursuit of happiness, as men understand the word; for the first step is sacrifice, the second renunciation. Occultism is the science of life, the art of living. (H. P. Blavatsky, 1887.)